

***In the City Council, April 6th, in the Year Two Thousand and Seventeen***

Upon the recommendation of Councilor Alisa F. Klein, Councilor Maureen T. Carney, Councilor Dennis P. Bidwell, and the Energy and Sustainability Commission

**R-17.295**

**A Resolution**

**Calling on the Massachusetts Legislature to Establish Carbon Pollution Pricing to Curb Climate Change**

WHEREAS, the scientific consensus firmly holds that catastrophic climate change is taking place and the burning of fossil fuels with its resultant carbon emission pollution is among the chief contributing factors; and

WHEREAS, the climate crisis is a serious threat to current and future generations here in the City of Northampton, and all over the world; and

WHEREAS, the City of Northampton has a responsibility to protect the lives and livelihoods of our residents from the threat of climate change; and

WHEREAS, the use of fossil fuels is pervasive in the City of Northampton, the State of Massachusetts, and throughout the country and the world; and

WHEREAS, the United States free market offers a fertile environment for creation of a diverse set of economical services and products in the areas of conservation, efficiency, and renewable energy to allow us to wean ourselves off fossil fuels; and

WHEREAS, free markets operate most efficiently when individuals and corporations are held accountable for the costs of their actions; and

WHEREAS, empirical evidence shows that price changes shift behavior, so by establishing carbon pollution pricing we can spur innovation of less environmentally-onerous ways of providing and consuming goods and services; and

WHEREAS, prices for fossil fuels do not reflect the cost of health impacts, climate change, and other environmental degradations that are associated with pervasive fossil fuel use and carbon emissions; and

WHEREAS, climate experts, Congressional leaders, and organizations from around the country have advanced proposals and legislative bills to rectify this price/cost disparity by imposing fees on carbon pollution emissions, including well-known earth and environmental sciences professor and climate change expert James Hansen; U.S. Senators Barbara Boxer, Bernie Sanders, and Sheldon Whitehouse; Public Citizen; and Citizens Climate Lobby; and

WHEREAS, in October 2016, the Massachusetts legislature's Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy held a hearing on carbon pollution pricing proposals, including S. 1747, An Act Combating Climate Change, and S. 1786, An Act to Protect our Environment and Reduce the Carbon Footprint of the Commonwealth, at which the testimony was strongly in favor of enacting carbon pollution pricing; and

WHEREAS, in the current session of the MA legislature two carbon pricing-related bills have been introduced, S.1821 - An Act Combating Climate Change and H.1726 – An Act to Promote Green Infrastructure, Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Create Jobs, and are being co-sponsored by over a third of our State legislators; and

WHEREAS, British Columbia implemented carbon pollution pricing in 2008 and according to a 2014 report in the *Economist*, British Columbia's economy is as strong as, and arguably better than, the rest of Canada while the carbon pricing is successfully driving environmental gains<sup>1</sup>; and

WHEREAS, on June 9, 2014, Citizens' Climate Lobby released a study from Regional Economic Models, Inc. (REMI) that examined the impact of a steadily rising fee on carbon-based fuels with revenue from that fee returned to households in equal shares with the fee starting at \$10 per ton of carbon dioxide and rising \$10 per ton each year and the major findings were:

- In 20 years, CO2 emissions would be reduced 50% below 1990 levels, and
- Because of the economic stimulus of recycling carbon fee revenue back to households, in 20 years, 2.8 million jobs would be added to the American economy, and
- Improved air quality would result in 230,000 premature deaths avoided over 20 years.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of Northampton, Massachusetts strongly urges the Massachusetts Legislature to pass legislation that puts a gradually increasing fee on carbon in fossil fuels to:

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.economist.com/blogs/americasview/2014/07/british-columbias-carbon-tax>  
17.295 – Final

- Make individuals and corporations accountable for the costs of their actions when they choose to use fossil fuels;
- Level the economic playing field between fossil fuels and conservation, efficiency, and renewable energy sources; and
- Ignite a free market-based clean energy revolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we strongly urge the Massachusetts Legislature to include a provision in the carbon pollution pricing legislation that it passes to ensure that the most economically vulnerable residents of Massachusetts are not caused any undue financial hardship because of the law.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Administrative Assistant to the City Council shall cause a copy of this resolution to be sent to MA Governor Charles Baker; State Treasurer Deborah B. Goldberg; MA Senate President Stanley C. Rosenberg; MA Speaker of the House Robert A. DeLeo; MA State Representative Peter V. Kocot; Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy, Senator Michael J. Barrett; House Chair of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy, State Representative Thomas A. Golden, Jr.; Senate Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy, Michael D. Brady; House Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy, Tackey Chan; all members of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy: Senators Marc R. Pacheco, Anne M. Gobi, Joan B. Lovely, Bruce E. Tarr; and Representatives James M. Cantwell, Carolyn C. Dykema, Nick Collins, Josh S. Cutler, Adrian Madaro, Daniel Cahill, Joan Meschino, Leonard Mirra, and Randy Hunt; U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren; and U.S. Senator Ed Markey.

In City Council, April 20, 2017

Attest:  Passed First Reading, on a Roll Call Vote of 9 Yes, 0 No  
Clerk of Council

In City Council, May 4, 2017

Attest:  Passed Second Reading, on a Roll Call Vote of 9 Yes, 0 No  
Clerk of Council

Rules suspended, passed two readings and enrolled  
I hereby certify that the above Resolution passed the Northampton City Council on May 4, 2017

Attest:  Clerk of Council